

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-14 ISO-00 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12
NEA-10 OIC-02 FEA-01 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00
ERDA-07 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 EPA-04 INR-07 L-03
NSF-02 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05 SS-15 SP-02 INT-05
PA-02 PRS-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /155 W
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 891

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DEPT PASS ALL OECD POSTS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV, UN OCON

SUBJ: UN CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION: OPENING DAY (AUGUST 29)

1. UN CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION, ENVISAGED AND
AUTHORIZED BY 29TH UNGA IN 1974, CONVENED AUGUST 29 IN
NAIROBI. WELCOMING STATEMENTS WERE READ BY KENYAN VICE
PRESIDENT DANIEL ARAP MOI AND UN UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL
VAN LAETHEM, REPRESENTING SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM.
SECRETARY GENERAL TOLBA THEN READ MESSAGE TO THE CONFERENCE
FROM PRESIDENT CARTER. SUBSEQUENTLY, KENYAN MINISTER OF
WATER DEVELOPMENT JULIUS KIANO, WHO HAD CHAIRED ONE OF
TWO COMMITTEES AT UN WATER CONFERENCE, WAS ELECTED
CONFERENCE PRESIDENT. WATER CONFERENCE SECRETARY GENRAL
MAGEED, IN FURTHER REFERENCE TO THAT EARLIER CONFERENCE,
ADDRESSED DELEGATION CONFERENCE AT END OF AFTERNOON.
PRINCIPAL SPEECH, HOWEVER, WAS GIVEN BY DR. TOLBA AS
SECRETARY GENRAL OF THE CONFERENCE.

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2. IN REVIEWING ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF DRAFT PLAN OF
ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, DR. TOLBA TOUCHED ON
AT LEAST TWO OF MORE CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS WHICH
CONFERENCE WILL ADDRESS, I.E. INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOLLOWING CONFERENCE. "WHAT IS NEEDED," HE
CONCLUDED, "IS A PLAN OF ACTION THAT IS BOTH REALISTIC
AND REALIZABLE - THAT IS TO SAY, SCIENTIFICALLY FEASIBLE

AND POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE, FOR BOTH ARE NECESSARY. ALSO NEEDED ARE WAYS TO IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN AND AN APPROPRIATE CONTINUING MECHANISM TO ENSURE ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE YEARS AHEAD." HE STOPPED SHORT OF STRONG ENDORSEMENT OF "CONSORTIUM" APPROACH, WHICH HE FAVORS, SAYING ONLY "THIS IS AN IMPORTANT QUESTION (ON WHICH) WE ESSENTIALLY LOOK TO THE DELEGATIONS FOR IDEAS AND GUIDANCE." SIMILARLY, HE ENDORSED ENVIRONMENT CO-ORDINATION BOARD (ECB) AS THE INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATING MECHANISM FOLLOWING THE CONFERENCE, BACKED UP BY "A SMALL NUMBER OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF," BUT DID NOT SPECIFY THAT THIS STAFF SHOULD BE IN UNEP.

3. TOLBA ALSO SAID THE FOLLOWING: "ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE NEEDED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN OF ACTION. QUESTIONS HAVE NATURALLY ARISEN, PARTICULARLY IN REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS, AS TO WHERE THE MONEY IS TO COME FROM, HOWEVER JUSTIFIED SUCH AN EXPENDITURE MAY BE. THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR AFRICA INCLINED TO THE VIEW THAT THE PLAN OF ACTION SHOULD BE FINANCED FROM A SPECIAL ANTI-DESERTIFICATION FUND. THE SECRETARIAT, WHILE REALIZING THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCH A CONCEPT, SINCE IT WOULD ENSURE EFFICIENCY IN MANAGEMENT AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES, FORESEES THAT SOME PROBLEMS MIGHT ARISE FROM THE ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH YET ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL FUND. A GROUP APPROACH, A 'MULTI-BI' APPROACH OR, IN UNCLASSIFIED

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SOME CIRCUMSTANCES, A CONSORTIUM APPROACH SEEM TO REPRESENT MORE ACCEPTABLE WAYS OF FINANCING ACTION ARISING FROM THE PLAN. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT QUESTION, AND ONE ON WHICH THE SECRETARIAT MAY COME UP WITH FURTHER PROPOSALS, BUT WE ESSENTIALLY LOOK TO THE DELEGATIONS FOR IDEAS AND GUIDANCE.

4. "ON INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN OF ACTION, THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS WERE OPPOSED TO THE PROLIFERATION OF BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES. THUS WE PROPOSE THAT IMPLEMENTATION BE COORDINATED AND SUPERVISED BY INSTITUTIONS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE. INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PLAN WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REQUIRE THE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS. AS FAR AS THE UNITED NATIONS IS CONCERNED, THE RESPONSIBILITY IS SEEN TO BE THAT OF THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE AND WILL AFFECT THE PROGRAMMES OF ITS VARIOUS COMPONENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE FUNDING AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. THE DRAFT PLAN SUGGESTS, THEREFORE, THAT OVERALL SUPERVISION AND COORDINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN BE

LODGED IN THE ENVIRONMENT CO-ORDINATION BOARD. TO CARRY OUT THIS ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, WE FORESEE THAT THE ENVIRONMENT CO-ORDINATION BOARD WILL HAVE TO BE SERVICED BY A SMALL NUMBER OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF SITUATED TO BEST ADVANTAGE WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, FORM WITHIN WHICH KEY ELEMENTS COULD BE ASSEMBLED. (IN ADDITION) TO HELP ASSURE PROPER COORDINATION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ENVISAGED IN THE PLAN OF ACTION, AND TO HELP ASSURE THAT RESEARCH IS ACCURATELY FOCUSSED AND THAT ITS FUNDINGS WILL BE DISSEMINATED, THE DRAFT PLAN SUGGESTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TECHNICAL COUNCIL, COMMITTEE OR GROUP, ADVISORY TO THE ENVIROMENT CO-ORDINATION BOARD."

5. UPON ADJOURNMENT OF OPENING DAY PLENARY, TWO
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MEMBERS OF USDEL REPAIRED TO WEOG MEETING, AT WHICH CANADIAN DELEGATION INTRODUCED ITS PROPOSAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS CENTERING ON UNDP RPT UNDP ROLE IN CONFERENCE FOLLOW-UP (DETAILS OF SOME INDIVIDUAL WEOG COUNTRY PRELIMINARY VIEWS FOLLOW SEPTTEL).
LE MELLE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ALL OECD POSTS.

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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